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"MISTAKES OF MOSES."

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ROBT. G. INGERSOLL'S

LAST BRILLIANT EFFORT,

AS DELIVERED IN HAVERLY'S THEATRE,

Chicago, Sunday March 23, '79.

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["A brilliant, genial gentleman; a man of brains, and a heart as tender as a woman's; a man greatly respected and admired by all who know him, greatly detested by many among those who do not, and who do not agree with him in opinion; a man who does his own thinking, and who says what he thinks, and thinks before he says it, is about to address you in review of a great historical character. He will do this from his own standpoint and in his own way. Had he lived one hundred years ago, and succeeded in doing this, he would, under the forms of law, have been imprisoned,—if, indeed, he were suffered to live,—his children taken from him, his property confiscated, his name traduced and his memory villified. Times have changed. The world of thought and opinion moves as well as the world of matter. He may speak to you here to-day, freely and without reserve. He may give his honest thought. You have come to hear him and not me. Let me introduce him,—Col. Robert G. Ingersoll."]

THE LECTURE.

Now and then some one asks me why I am endeavoring to interfere with the religious faith of others, and why I try to take from the world the consolation naturally arising from a belief in eternal fire. And I answer, I want to do what little I can to make my country truly free. I want to broaden the intellectual horizon of our people. I want it so that we can differ upon all those questions, and yet grasp each other's hands in genuine friendship. I want in the first place to free the clergy. I am a great friend of theirs, but they don't seem to have found it out generally. I want it so that every minister will be not a parrot, not an owl sitting upon a dead limb of the tree of knowledge and hooting the hoots that have been hooted for eighteen hundred years. But I want it so that each one can be an investigator, a thinker; and I want to make his congregation grand enough so that they will not only allow him to think, but will demand that he shall think, and give to them the honest truth of his thought. As it is now, ministers are employed like attorneys—for the plaintiff or the defendant. If a few people know of a young man in the neighborhood maybe who has not a good constitution—he may not be healthy enough to be wicked—a young man who has shown no decided talent—it occurs to them to make him a minister. They contribute and send him to some school. If it turns out that that young man has more of the man in him than they thought, and he changes his opinion, everyone who contributed will feel himself individually swindled—and they will follow that young man to the grave with the poisoned shafts of malice and slander. I want it so that every one will be free—so that a pulpit will not be a pillory. They have in Massachusetts, at a place called Andover, a kind of minister-factory; and every professor in that factory takes an oath once in every five years—that is as long as an oath will last—that not only has he not during the last five years, but so help him God, he will not during the next five years intellectually advance; and probably there is no oath he could easier keep. Since the foundation of that institution there has not been one case of perjury. They believe the same creed they first taught when the foundation stone was laid, and now when they send out a minister they brand him as hardware from Sheffield and Birmingham. And every man who knows where he was educated knows his creed, knows every argument of his creed, every book that he reads, and just what he amounts to intellectually, and knows he will shrink and shrivel,

and become solemnly stupid day after day until he meets with death. It is all wrong; it is cruel. Those men should be allowed to grow. They should have the air of liberty and the sunshine of thought.

I want to free the schools of our country. I want it so that when a professor in a college finds some fact inconsistent with Moses, he will not hide the fact, that it will not be the worse for him for having discovered the fact. I wish to see an eternal divorce and separation between church and schools. The common school is the bread of life; but there should be nothing taught in the schools except what somebody knows; and anything else should not be maintained by a system of general taxation. I want its professors so that they will tell everything they find; that they will be free to investigate in every direction, and will not be trammeled by the superstitions of our day. What has religion to do with facts? Nothing, Is there any such thing as Methodist mathematics, Presbyterian botany, Catholic astronomy or Baptist biology? What has any form of superstition or religion to do with a fact or with any science? Nothing but to hinder, delay or embarrass. I want, then, to free the schools; and I want to free the politicians, so that a man will not have to pretend he is a Methodist, or his wife a Baptist, or his grandmother a Catholic; so that he can go through a campaign, and when he gets through will find none of the dust of hypocrisy on his knees.

I want the people splendid enough that when they desire men to make laws for them, they will take one who knows something, who has brain enough to prophesy the destiny of the American Republic, no matter what his opinions may be upon any religious subject. Suppose we are in a storm out at sea, and the billows are washing over our ship, and it is necessary that some one should reef the topsail, and a man presents himself. Would you stop him at the foot of the mast to find out his opinion on the five points of Calvinism? What has that to do with it? Congress has nothing to do with baptism or any particular creed, and from what little experience I have had of Washington, very little to do with any kind of religion whatever. Now I hope, this afternoon, this magnificent and splendid audience will forget that they are Baptists or Methodists, and remember that they are men and women. These are the highest titles humanity can bear—man and woman; and every title you add belittles them. Man is the highest; woman is the highest. Let us remember that we are simply human beings, with interests in common. And let us all remember that our views depend largely upon the country in which we happen to live. Suppose we were born in Turkey most of us would have been Mohammedans; and when we read in the book that when Mohammed visited heaven he became acquainted with an angel named Gabriel, who was so broad between his eyes that it would take a smart camel three hundred days to make the journey, we probably would have believed it. If we did not, people would say: "That young man is dangerous; he is trying to tear down the fabric of our religion. What do you propose to give us instead of that angel? We cannot afford to trade off an angel of that size for nothing." Or if we had been born in India, we would have believed in a god with three heads. Now we believe in three gods with one head. And so we might make a tour of the world and see that every superstition that could be imagined by the brain of man has been in some place held to be sacred.

Now someone says, "The religion of my father and mother is good enough for me." Suppose we all said that, where would be the progress of the world? We would have the rudest and most barbaric religion, which no one could believe. I do not believe that it is showing real respect to our parents to believe something

simply because they did. Every good father and every good mother wish their children to find out more than they knew; every good father wants his son to overcome some obstacle that he could not grapple with; and if you wish to reflect credit on your father and mother, do it by accomplishing more than they did, because you live in a better time. Every nation has had what you call a sacred record, and the older the more sacred, the more contradictory and the more inspired is the record. We, of course, are not an exception, and I propose to talk a little about what is called the Pentateuch, a book, or a collection of books, said to have been written by Moses. And right here in the commencement let me say that Moses never wrote one word of the Pentateuch—not one word was written until he had been dust and ashes for hundreds of years. But as the general opinion is that Moses wrote these books, I have entitled this lecture "The Mistakes of Moses." For the sake of this lecture, we will admit that he wrote it. Nearly every maker of religion has commenced by making the world; and it is one of the safest things to do, because no one can contradict as having been present, and it gives free scope to the imagination. These books, in times when there was a vast difference between the educated and the ignorant, became inspired and people bowed down and worshipped them.

I saw a little while ago a Bible with immense oaken covers, with hasps and clasps large enough almost for a penitentiary, and I can imagine how that book would be regarded by barbarians in Europe when not more than one person in a dozen could read and write. In imagination I saw it carried into the cathedral, heard the chant of the priest, saw the swinging of the censer and the smoke rising; and when that Bible was put on the altar I can imagine the barbarians looking at it and wondering what influence that black book could have on their lives and future. I do not wonder that they imagined it was inspired. None of them could write a book, and consequently when they saw it they adored it; they were stricken with awe; and rascals took advantage of that awe.

Now they say that the book is inspired. I do not care whether it is or not; the question is, Is it true? If it is true it don't need to be inspired. Nothing needs inspiration except a falsehood or a mistake. A fact never went into partnership with a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of wonders. A fact will fit every other fact in the universe, and that is how you can tell whether it is or is not a fact. A lie will not fit anything except another lie made for the express purpose; and, finally, some one gets tired of lying, and the last lie will not fit the next fact, and then there is a chance for inspiration. Right then and there a miracle is needed. The real question is: In the light of science, in the light of the brain and heart of the nineteenth century, is this book true? The gentleman who wrote it begins by telling us that God made the universe out of nothing. That I cannot conceive; it may be so, but I cannot conceive it. Nothing, regarded in the light of raw material, is, to my mind, a decided and disastrous failure. I cannot imagine of nothing being made into something, any more than I can of something being changed back into nothing. I cannot conceive of force aside from matter, because force to be orce must be active, and unless there is matter there is nothing for force to act upon, and consequently it cannot be active. So I simply say I cannot comprehend it. I cannot believe it. I may roast for this, but it is my honest opinion. The next thing he proceeds to tell us is that God divided the darkness from the light; and right here let me say when I speak about God I simply mean the being described by the Jews. There may be in immensity some being beneath whose wing the universe exists, whose every thought is a glittering star, but I know nothing about

Him,—not the slightest,—and this afternoon I am simply talking about the being described by the Jewish people. When I say God, I mean Him. Moses describes God dividing the light from the darkness. I suppose that at that time they must have been mixed. You can readily see how light and darkness can get mixed. They must have been entities. The reason I think so is because in that same book I find that darkness overspread Egypt so thick that it could be felt, and they used to have on exhibition in Rome a bottle of the darkness that once overspread Egypt. The gentleman who wrote this in imagination saw God dividing light from the darkness. I am sure the man who wrote it, believed darkness to be an entity, a something, a tangible thing that can be mixed with light.

The next thing that he informs us is that God divided the waters above the firmament from those below the firmament. The man who wrote that believed the firmament to be a solid affair. And that is what the gods did. You recollect the gods came down and made love to the daughters of men—and I never blamed them for it. I have never read a description of any heaven I would not leave on the same errand. That is where the gods lived. That is where they kept the water. It was solid. That is the reason the people prayed for rain. They believed that an angel could take a lever, raise a window and let out the desired quantity. I find in the Psalms that "He bowed the heavens and came down;" and we read that the children of men built a tower to reach the heavens and climb into the abode of the gods. The man who wrote that believed the firmament to be solid. He knew nothing about the laws of evaporation. He did not know that the sun wooed with amorous kiss the waves of the sea, and that, disappointed, their vaporous sighs changed to tears and fell again as rain. The next thing he tells us is that the grass began to grow, and the branches of the trees laughed into blossom, and the grass ran up the shoulder of the hills, and yet not a solitary ray of light had left the eternal quiver of the sun. Not a blade of grass had ever been touched by a gleam of light. And I do not think that grass will grow to hurt without a gleam of sunshine. I think the man who wrote that simply made a mistake, and is excusable to a certain degree. The next day he made the sun and moon—the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. Do you think the man who wrote that knew anything about the size of the sun? I think he thought it was about three feet in diameter, because I find in some book that the sun was stopped a whole day, to give a general named Joshua time to kill a few more Amalekites; and the moon was stopped also. Now, it seems to me that the sun would give light enough without stopping the moon; but as they were in the stopping business they did it just for devilment. At another time, we read, the sun was turned ten degrees backward to convince Hezekiah that he was not going to die of a boil. How much easier it would have been to cure the boil! The man who wrote that thought the sun was two or three feet in diameter, and could be stopped and pulled around like the sun and moon in a theatre. Do you know that the sun throws out every second of time as much heat as could be generated by burning eleven thousand millions tons of coal. I don't believe he knew that, or that he knew the motion of the earth. I don't believe he knew that it was turning on its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, because if he did, he would have understood the immensity of heat that would have been generated by stopping the world. It has been calculated by one of the best mathematicians and astronomers that to stop the world would cause as much heat as it would take to burn a lump of solid coal three times as big as the globe. And yet we find in that book that the sun was not only stopped, but turned back ten degrees, simply to convince a

gentleman that he was not going to die of a boil! They may say I will be damned if I do not believe that, and I tell them I will if I do.

Then he gives us the history of astronomy, and he gives it to us in five words: "He made the stars also." He came very near forgetting the stars. Do you believe that the man who wrote that knew that there are stars as much larger than this earth as this earth is larger than the apple which Adam and Eve are said to have eaten? Do you believe that he knew that this world is but a speck in the shining, glittering universe of existence? I would gather from that that he made the stars after he got the world done. The telescope, in reading the infinite leaves of the heavens, has ascertained that light travels at the rate of 192,000 miles per second, and it would require millions of years to come from some of the stars to this earth. Yet the beams of those stars mingle in our atmosphere, so that if those distant orbs were fashioned when this world began, we must have been whirling in space not six thousand, but many millions of years. Do you believe the man who wrote that as a history of astronomy really knew that this world was but a speck compared with millions of sparkling orbs? I do not. He then proceeds to tell us that God made fish and cattle, and that man and woman were created male and female. The first account stops at the second verse of the second chapter. You see, the Bible originally was not divided into chapters; the first Bible that was ever divided into chapters in our language was made in the year of grace 1550. The Bible was originally written in the Hebrew language, and the Hebrew language at that time had no vowels in writing. It was written entirely with consonants, and without being divided into chapters or into verses, and there was no system of punctuation whatever. After you go home to-night write an English sentence or two with only consonants close together, and you will find that it will take twice as much inspiration to read it as it did to write it. When the Bible was divided into verses and chapters, the divisions were not always correct, and so the division between the first and second chapter of Genesis is not in the right place. The second account of the creation commences at the third verse, and it differs from the first in two essential points. In the first account man is the last made; in the second, man is made before the beasts. In the first account, man is made "male and female;" in the second only a man is made, and there is no intention of making a woman whatever.

You will find by reading that second chapter that God tried to palm off on Adam a beast as his helpmeet. Everybody talks about the Bible and nobody reads it; that is the reason it is so generally believed. I am probably the only man in the United States who has read the Bible through this year. I have wasted that time, but I had a purpose in view. Just read it, and you will find, about the twenty-third verse, that God caused all the animals to walk before Adam in order that he might name them. And the animals came like a menagerie into town, and as Adam looked at all the crawlers, jumpers and creepers, this God stood by to see what he would call them. After this procession passed, it was pathetically remarked, "Yet was there not found any helpmeet for Adam." Adam didn't see anything that he could fancy. And I am glad he didn't. If he had, there would not have been a free-thinker in this world; we should have all died orthodox. And finding Adam was so particular, God had to make him a helpmeet, and having used up the nothing he was compelled to take part of the man to make the woman with, and he took from the man a rib. How did he get it? And then imagine a God with a bone in his hand, and about to start a woman, trying to make up his mind whether to make a blonde or a brunette. Right here it is only proper that I should warn you of

the consequences of laughing at any story in the holy Bible. When you come to die, your laughing at this story will be a thorn in your pillow. As you look back upon the record of your life, no matter how many men you have wrecked and ruined, and no matter how many women you have deceived and deserted—all that may be forgiven you; but if you recollect that you have laughed at God's book you will see through the shadows of death, the leering looks of fiends and the forked tongues of devils. Let me show you how it will be. For instance, it is the day of judgement. When the man is called up by the recording secretary, or whoever does the cross-examining, he says to his soul: "Where are you from?" "I am from the world." "Yes, sir. What kind of a man were you?" "Well, I don't like to talk about myself." "But you have to. What kind of a man were you?" "Well, I was a good fellow; I loved my wife, I loved my children. My home was my heaven; my fireside was my paradise, and to sit there and see the lights and shadows falling on the faces of those I love, that to me was a perpetual joy. I never gave one of them a solitary moment of pain. I don't owe a dollar in the world, and I left enough to pay my funeral expenses and keep the wolf of want from the door of the house I loved. That is the kind of a man I am." "Did you belong to any church?" "I did not. They were too narrow for me. They were always expecting to be happy simply because somebody else was to be damned." "Well, did you believe that rib story? What rib story? Do you mean that Adam and Eve business? No, I did not. To tell you the God's truth, that was a little more than I could swallow." "To hell with him! Next. Where are you from?" "I'm from the world, too." "Do you belong to any church?" "Yes, sir, and to the Young Men's Christian Association." "What is your business?" "Cashier in a bank." "Did you ever run off with any of the money?" "I don't like to tell, sir." "Well, but you have to." "Yes, sir; I did." "What kind of a bank did you have." "A savings bank." "How much did you run off with?" "One hundred thousand dollars." "Did you take anything else along with you?" "Yes, sir." "What?" "I took my neighbor's wife." "Did you have a wife and children of your own?" "Yes, sir." "And you deserted them?" "Oh, yes; but such was my confidence in God that I believed He would take care of them." "Have you heard of them since?" "No, sir." "Did you believe that rib story?" "Ah, bless your soul, yes! I believed all of it, sir; I often used to be sorry that there were not harder stories yet in the Bible, so that I could show what my faith could do," "You believed it, did you?" "Yes, with all my heart." "Give him a harp."

I simply wanted to show you how important it is to believe these stories. Of all the authors in the world God hates a critic the worst. Having got this woman done he brought her to the man, and they started housekeeping, and a few minutes afterward a snake came through a crack in the fence and commenced to talk with her on the subject of fruit. She was not acquainted in the neighborhood, and she did not know whether snakes talked or not, or whether they knew anything about the apples or not. Well, she was misled, and the husband ate some of those apples and laid it all on his wife; and there is where the mistake was made. God ought to have rubbed him out at once. He might have known that no good could come of starting the world with a man like that. They were turned out. Then the trouble commenced, and people got worse and worse. God, you must recollect, was holding the reins of government, but he did nothing for them. He allowed them to live six hundred and sixty-nine years without knowing their A. B. C. He never started a school, not even a Sunday school. He didn't even keep His own boys at home. And the world got worse every day, and finally he concluded to

drown them. Yet that same god has the impudence to tell me how to raise my own children. What would you think of a neighbor, who had just killed his babes giving you his views on domestic economy? God found that he could do nothing with them and He said: "I will drown them all, except a few." And He picked out a fellow by the name of Noah, that had been a bachelor for five hundred years. If I had to drown anybody, I would have drowned him. I believe that Noah had then been married something like one hundred years. God told him to build a boat, and he built one five hundred feet long, eighty or ninety feet broad and fifty-five feet high, with one door shutting on the outside, and one window twenty-two inches square. If Noah had any hobby in the world it was ventilation. Then into this ark he put a certain number of all the animals in the world. Naturalists have ascertained that at that time there were at least eleven hundred thousand insects necessary to go into the ark, about forty thousand mammalia, sixteen hundred reptilia, to say nothing about the mastodon, the elephant and the animalculæ, of which thousands live upon a single leaf and which cannot be seen by the naked eye. Noah had no microscope, and yet he had to pick them out by pairs. You have no idea the trouble that man had. Some say that the flood was not universal, that it was partial. Why, then, did God say: "I will destroy every living thing beneath the heavens." If it was partial why did Noah save the birds? An ordinary bird, tending strictly to business, can beat a partial flood. Why did he put the birds in there—the eagles, the vultures, the condors—if it was only a partial flood? And how did he get them in there? Were they inspired to go there, or did he drive them up? Did the polar bear leave his home of ice and start for the tropics inquiring for Noah; or could the kangaroo come from Australia unless he was inspired, or somebody was behind him? Then there are animals on this hemisphere not on that. How did he get them across? And there are some animals which would be very unpleasant in an ark unless the ventilation was very perfect.

When he got the animals in the ark, God shut the door and Noah pulled down the window. And then it began to rain, and it kept on raining until the water went twenty-nine feet over the highest mountain. Chimborazo, then as now, lifted its head above the clouds, and then as now, there sat the condor. And yet the waters rose and rose over every mountain in the world—twenty-nine feet above the highest peaks, covered with snow and ice. How deep were these waters? About five and a half miles. How long did it rain? Forty days. How much did it have to rain a day? About eight hundred feet. How is that for dampness? No wonder they said the windows of the heavens were open. If I had been there I would have said the whole side of the house was out. How long were they in this ark? A year and ten days, floating around with no rudder, no sail, nobody on the outside at all. The window was shut, and there was no door, except the one that shut on the outside. Who ran this ark—who took care of it? Finally it came down on Mount Ararat, a peak seventeen thousand feet above the level of the sea, with about three thousand feet of snow, and it stopped there simply to give the animals from the tropics a chance. Then Noah opened the window and got a breath of fresh air, and he let out all the animals; and then Noah took a drink, and God made a bargain with him that He would not drown us any more, and He put a rainbow in the clouds and said: "When I see that I will recollect that I have promised not to drown you." Because if it was not for that He is apt to drown us at any moment. Now can anybody believe that that is the origin of the rainbow? Are you not all familiar with the natural causes which bring those beautiful arches

before our eyes? Then the people started out again, and they were as bad as before. Here let me ask why God did not make Noah in the first place? He knew he would have to drown Adam and Eve and all his family. Then another thing, why did He want to drown the animals? What had they done? What crime had they committed? It is very hard to answer these questions—that is, for a man who has only been born once. After a while they tried to build a tower to get into heaven, and the gods heard about it and said: "Let's go down and see what man is up to." They came and found things a great deal worse than they thought, and thereupon they confounded the language to prevent them succeeding, so that the fellow up above could not shout down "mortar" or "brick" to the one below, and they had to give it up. Is it possible that anyone believes that that is the reason why we have the variety of languages in the world? Do you know that language is born of human experience, and is a physical science? Do you know that every word has been suggested in some way by the feelings or observations of man—that there are words as tender as the dawn, as serene as the stars, and others as wild as the beasts? Do you know that language is dying and being born continually—that every language has its cemetery and cradle, its bud and blossom, and withered leaf? Man has loved, enjoyed and suffered, and language is simply the expression he gives those experiences.

Then the world began to divide, and the Jewish nation was started. Now, I want to say that at one time your ancestors, like mine, were barbarians. If the Jewish people had to write these books now they would be civilized books, and I do not hold them responsible for what their ancestors did. We find the Jewish people first in Canaan, and there were seventy of them, counting Joseph and his children already in Egypt. They lived two hundred and fifteen years, and they then went down into Egypt and stayed there two hundred and fifteen years; they were four hundred and thirty years in Canaan and Egypt. How many did they have when they went to Egypt? Seventy. How many were they at the end of two hundred and fifteen years? Three millions. That is a good many. We had at the time of the Revolution in this country three millions of people. Since that time there have been four doubles, until we have forty-eight millions to-day. How many would the Jews number at the same ratio in two hundred and fifteen years? Call it eight doubles and we have forty thousand. But instead of forty thousand they had three millions. How do I know they had three million?s Because they had six hundred thousand men of war. For every honest voter in the state of Illinois there will be five other people, and there are always more voters than men of war. They must have had at the lowest possible estimate three millions of people. Is that true? Is there a minister in the city of Chicago that will certify to his own idiocy by claiming that they could have increased to three millions by that time? If there is, let him say so. Do not let him talk about the civilizing influence of a lie.

When they got into the desert they took a census to see how many first born children there were. They found they had twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy three first born males. It is reasonable to suppose there was about the same number of first born girls, or forty-five thousand first born children. There must have been about as many mothers as first-born children. Dividing three millions by forty-five thousand mothers, and you will find that the women in Israel had to have on the average sixty-eight children apiece. Some stories are too thin. This is too thick. Now, we know that among three million people there will be about three hundred births a day; and according to the Old Testament, when

ever a child was born the mother had to make a sacrifice,—a sin-offering for the crime of having been a mother. If there is in this universe anything that is infinitely pure, it is a mother with her child in her arms. Every woman had to have a sacrifice of a couple of doves, a couple of pigeons, and the priests had to eat those pigeons in the most holy place. At that time there were at least three hundred births a day, and the priests had to cook and eat those pigeons in the most holy place; and at that time there were only three priests. Two hundred birds a piece per day! I look upon them as the champion bird-eaters of the world.

Then where were these Jews? They were upon the desert of Sinai; and Sahara compared to that is a garden. Imagine an ocean of lava, torn by storm and vexed by tempest, suddenly gazed at by a Gorgon, and changed to stone. Such was the desert of Sinai. The whole supplies of the world could not maintain three millions of people on the desert of Sinai for forty years, It would cost one hundred thousand millions of dollars, and would bankrupt Christendom. And yet there they were with flocks and herds—so many that they sacrificed over one hundred and fifty thousand first-born lambs at one time. It would require millions of acres to support those flocks, and yet there was no blade of grass, and there is no account of it raining baled hay. They sacrificed one hundred and fifty thousand lambs, and the blood had all to be sprinkled on the altar within two hours, and there were only three priests. They would have to sprinkle the blood of twelve hundred and fifty lambs per minute. Then all the people gathered in front of the tabernacle eighteen feet deep. Three millions of people would make a column six miles long. Some reverend gentlemen say they were ninety feet deep. Well, that would make a column of over a mile.

Where were these people going. They were going to the Holy Land. How large was it? Twelve thousand square miles—one-fifth the size of Illinois—a frightful country, covered with rocks and desolation. There never was a land agent in the city of Chicago that would not have blushed with shame to have described that land as flowing with milk and honey. Do you believe that God Almighty ever went into partnership with hornets? Is it necessary unto salvation? God said to the Jews: "I will send hornets before you, to drive out the Canaanites." How would a hornet know a Canaanite? Is it possible that God inspired the hornets—that he granted letters of marque and reprisal to hornets? I am willing to admit that nothing in the world would be better calculated to make a man leave his native country than a few hornets attending strictly to business. God said "Kill the Canaanites slowly." Why? "Lest the beasts of the field increase upon you." How many Jews were there? Three millions. Going to a conntry, how large? Twelve thousand square miles. But were there nations already in this Holy Land? Yes, there were seven nations "mightier than the Jews." Say there would be twenty-one millions when they got there, or twenty-four millions with themselves. Yet they were told to kill them slowly, lest the beasts of the field increased upon them. Is there a man in Chicago that believes that? Then what does he teach it to little children for? Let him tell the truth.

So the same God went into partnership with snakes. The children of Israel lived on manna—one account says all the time, and another only a little while. That is the reason there is a chance for commentaries, and you can exercise faith. If the book was reasonable everybody could get to heaven in a moment. But whenever it looks as if it could not be that way and you believe, you are almost a saint, and when you know it is not that way and believe you are a saint. He fed them on manna. Now manna is very peculiar stuff. It would melt in the sun,

and yet they used to cook it by seething and baking. I would as soon think of frying snow or boiling icicles. But this manna had other peculiar qualities. It shrank to an omer, no matter how much they gathered, and swelled up to an omer, no matter how little they gathered. What a magnificent thing manna would be for the currency, shrinking and swelling according to the volume of business! There was not a change in the bill of fare for forty years, and they knew that God could just as well give them three square meals a day. They remembered about the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks and the onions of Egypt, and they said: "Our souls abhorreth this light bread." Then this God got mad—you know cooks are always touchy—and thereupon He sent snakes to bite the men, women and children. He also sent them quails in wrath and anger, and while they had the flesh between their teeth, He struck thousands of them dead. He always acted in that way, all of a sudden. People had no chance to explain—no chance to move for a new trial—nothing. I want to know if it is reasonable He should kill people for asking for one change of diet in forty years. Suppose you had been boarding with an old lady for forty years, and she never had a solitary thing on her table but hash, and one morning you said: "My soul abhorreth hash." What would you say if she let a basketful of rattlesnakes upon you? Now it it possible for people to believe this? The Bible says that their clothes did not wax old, they did not get shiny at the knees or elbows; and their shoes did not wear out. They grew right along with them. The little boy starting out with his first pants grew up and his pants grew with him. Some commentators have insisted that angels attended to their wardrobes. I never could believe it. Just think of one angel hunting another and saying: "There goes another button." I cannot believe it.

There must be a mistake somewhere or somehow. Do you believe the real God,—if there is one—ever killed a man for making hair-oil? And yet you find in the Pentateuch that God gave Moses a recipe for making hair-oil to grease Aaron's beard; and said if anybody made the same hair-oil he should be killed. And He gave him a formula for making ointment, and He said if anybody made ointment like that he should be killed. I think that is carrying patent laws to excess. There must be some mistake about it. I cannot imagine the infinite Creator of all the shining worlds giving a recipe for hair-oil. Do you believe that the real God came down to Mount Sinai with a lot of patterns for making a tabernacle—patterns for tongs, for snuffers and such things? Do you believe that God came down on that mountain and told Moses how to cut a coat, and how it should be trimmed? What would an infinite God care on which side he cut the breast, what color the fringe was, or how the buttons were placed? Do you believe God told Moses to make curtains of fine linen? Where did they get their flax in the desert? How did they weave it?. Did He tell him to make things of gold, silver and precious stones, when they hadn't them? Is it possible that God told them not to eat any fruit until after the fourth year of planting the trees? You see all these things were written hundreds of years afterwards, and the priests, in order to collect the tithes, dated the laws back. They did not say, "This is our law," but, "Thus said God to Moses in the wilderness." Now, can you believe that? Imagine a scene: The eternal God tells Moses, "Here is the way I want you to consecrate my priests. Catch a sheep and cut his throat." I never could understand why God wanted a sheep killed just because a man had done a mean trick; perhaps it was because his priests were fond of mutton. He tells Moses further to take some of the blood and put it on his right thumb, a little on his right ear, and a little on his right big toe. Do you believe God ever gave such instructions for the consecra-

tion of His priests. If you should see the South Sea Islanders going through such a performance you could not keep your face straight. And will you tell me that it had to be done in order to consecrate a man to the service of the infinite God? Supposing the blood got on the left toe!

Then we find in this book how God went to work to make the Egyptians let the Israelites go. Suppose we wish to make a treaty with the mikado of Japan, and Mr. Hayes sent a commissioner there; and suppose he should employ Hermann, the wonderful German, to go along with him; and when they came in the presence of the mikado Hermann threw down an umbrella, which changed into a turtle, and the commissioner said: "That is my certificate." You would say the country is disgraced. You would say the president of a republic like this disgraces himself with jugglery. Yet we are told God sent Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, and when they got there Moses threw down a stick, which turned into a snake. That God is a juggler—he is the infinite prestidigitator. Is that possible? Was that really a snake, or was it the appearance of a snake? If it was the appearance of a snake, it was a fraud. Then the necromancers of Egypt were sent for, and they threw down sticks, which turned into snakes, but those were not so large as Moses' snake, which swallowed them. I maintain that it is just as hard to make small snakes as it is to make large ones; the only difference is that to make large snakes either larger sticks or more practice is required.

Do you believe that God rained hail on the innocent cattle, killing them in the highways and in the field? Why should he inflict punishment on cattle for something their owners had done? I could never have any respect for a God that would so inflict pain upon a brute beast simply on account of the crime of its owner. Is it possible that God worked miracles to convince Pharaoh that slavery was wrong? Why did he not tell Pharaoh that any nation founded on slavery could not stand? Why did he not tell him, "Your government is founded on slavery, and it will go down, and the sands of the desert will hide from the view of man your temples, your altars, and your fanes?" Why did not he speak about the infamy of slavery? Because he believed in the infamy of slavery himself. Can we believe that God will allow a man to give his wife the right of divorcement and make the mother of his children a wanderer and a vagrant. There is not one word about woman in the Old Testament except the word of shame and humiliation. The God of the Bible does not think woman is as good as man. She was never worth mentioning. It did not take the pains to recount the death of the mother of us all. I have no respect for any book that does not treat woman as the equal of man. And if there is any God in this universe who thinks more of me than he thinks of my wife, he is not well acquainted with both of us. And yet they say that that was done on account of the hardness of their hearts; and that was done in a community where the law was so fierce that it stoned a man to death for picking up sticks on Sunday. Would it not have been better to stone to death every man who abused his wife and allowed them to pick up sticks on account of the hardness of their hearts? If God wanted to take those Jews from Egypt to the land of Canaan, why didn't He do it instantly? If He was going to do a miracle, why didn't He do one worth talking about?

After God had killed all the first-born in Egypt, after he had killed all the cattle, still Egypt could raise an army that could put to flight six hundred thousand men. And because this God overwhelmed the Egyptian army, he bragged about it for a thousand years, repeatedly calling the attention of the Jews to the fact that he overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts. Did he help much with their six hundred thousand men? We find by the records of the day that the Egyptian standing army at

that time was never more than one hundred thousand men. Must we believe all these stories in order to get to heaven when we die? Must you judge of a man's character by the number of stories he believes? Are we to get to heaven by creed or by deed? That is the question. Shall we reason, or shall we simply believe? Ah, but they say the Bible is not inspired about those little things. The Bible says the rabbit and the hare chew the cud. But they do not. They have a tremulous motion of the lip. But the Being that made them says they chew the cud. The Bible therefore, is not inspired in natural history. Is it inspired in its astrology? No. Well, what is it inspired in? In its law? Thousands of people say that if it had not been for the ten commandments we would not have known any better than to rob and steal. Suppose a man planted an acre of potatoes, hoed them all summer and dug them in the fall; and suppose a man had sat upon the fence all the time and watched him; do you believe it would be necessary for that man to read the ten commandments to find out who, in his judgment, had a right to take those potatoes? All laws against larency have been made by industry to protect the fruits of its labor. Why is there a law against murder? Simply because a large majority of people object to being murdered. That is all. And all these laws were in force thousands of years before that time.

One of the commandments said they should not make any graven images, and that was the death of art in Palestine. No sculptor has ever enriched stone with the divine forms of beauty in that country; and any commandment that is the death of art is not a good commandment. But they say the Bible is morally inspired; and they tell me there is no civilization without this Bible. Then God knows that just as well as you do. God always knew it, and if you can't civilize a nation without a Bible, why didn't God give every nation just one bible to start with? Why did God allow hundreds of thousands and billions of billions to go down to hell just for the lack of a Bible? They say that it is morally inspired. Well, let us examine it. I want to be fair about this thing, because I am willing to stake my salvation or damnation on this question, whether the Bible is true or not. I say it is not; and upon that I am willing to wager my soul. Is there a woman here who believes in the institution of polygamy? Is there a man here who believes in that infamy? You say: "No we do not." Then you are better than your God was four thousand years ago. Four thousand years ago he believed in it, taught it and upheld it. I pronounce it and denounce it the infamy of infamies. It robs our language of every sweet and tender word in it. It takes the fireside away forever. It takes the meaning out of the words father, mother, sister, brother, and turns the temple of love into a vile den where crawl the slimy snakes of lust and hatred. I was in Utah a little while ago, and was on the mountain where God used to talk to Brigham Young. He never said anything to me. I said it was just as reasonable that God in the nineteenth century would talk to a polygamist in Utah as it was that four thousand years ago, on Mount Sinai, he talked to Moses upon that hellish and damnable question.

I have no love for any God who believes in polygamy. There is no heaven on this earth save where the one woman loves the one man and the one man loves the one woman. I guess it is not inspired on the polygamy question. Maybe it is inspired about religious liberty. God says that if anybody differs with you about religion, "kill him." He told His peculiar people, "If any one teaches a different religion, kill him!" He did not say try and convince him that he is wrong, bu "kill him." He did not say, "I am in the miracle business, and I will convince him; but "kill him." He said to every husband, "If your wife, that you love as you

love your own soul, says, "'let us go and worship other gods,' then 'thy hand shall be first upon her and she shall be stoned with stones until she dies.'" Well now, I hate a God of that kind and I cannot think of being nearer heaven than to be away from Him. A God tells a man to kill his wife simply because she differs with him on religion! If the real God were to tell me to kill my wife, I would not do it. If you had lived in Palestine at that time, and your wife—the mother of your children—had woke up at night and said: "I am tired of Jehovah. He is always turning up that board bill. He is always telling about whipping the Egyptians. He is always killing somebody. I am tired of Him. Let us worship the sun. The sun has clothed the world in beauty; it has covered the earth with green and flowers; by its divine light I first saw your face; its light has enabled me to look into the eyes of my beautiful babe. Let us worship the sun, father and mother of light and love and joy." Then what would it be your duty to do—kill her? Do you believe any real god ever did that? Your hand should be first upon her, and when you took up some ragged rock and hurled it against the white bosom filled with love for you, and saw running away the red current of her sweet life, then you would look up to heaven and receive the congratulations of the infinite fiend whose commandments you had to obey. I guess the Bible was not inspired about religious liberty. Let me ask you right here: Suppose, as a matter of fact, God gave those laws to the Jews and told them "whenever a man preaches a different religion, kill him," and suppose that afterwards that same God took upon himself flesh and came to the world and taught and preached a different religion, and the Jews crucified him—did he not reap exactly what he sowed?

May be this book is inspired about war. God told the Israelites to overrun that country, and kill every man, woman, and child for defending their native land Kill the old men? Yes. Kill the women? Certainly. And the little dimpled babes in the cradle, that smile and coo in the face of murder—dash out their brains; that is the will of God. Will you tell me that any god ever commanded such infamy? Kill the men and the women, and the young men and the babes! "What shall we do with the maidens?" "Give them to the rabble murderers!" Do you believe that God ever allowed the roses of love and the violets of modesty that shed their perfume in the heart of a maiden to be trampled beneath the brutal feet of lust? If there is any God, I pray him to write in the book of eternal remembrance, opposite to my name, that I denied that lie. Whenever a woman reads a Bible and comes to that passage, she ought to throw the book from her in contempt and scorn. Do you tell me that any decent god would do that? What would the devil have done under the same circumstances! Just think of it; and yet that is the God that we want to get into the constitution. That is the God we teach our children about, so that they will be sweet and tender, amiable and kind! That monster—that fiend! I guess the bible is not inspired about religious liberty, nor about war.

Then, if it is not inspired about these things, maybe it is inspired about slavery. God tells the Jews to buy up the children of the heathen round about and they should be servants for them. What is a "servant?" If they struck a "servant" and he died immediately, punishment was to follow; but if the injured man should linger a while, there was no punishment, because the servant represented their money! Do you believe that it is right—that God made one man to work for another and to receive pay in rations? Do you believe God said that a whip on the naked back was the legal tender for labor performed? Is it possible that the real God ever gave such infamous, blood-thirsty laws? What more does he say?

When the time of a married slave expired, he could not take his wife and children with him. Then if the slave did not wish to desert his family, he had his ears pierced with an awl, and became his master's property for ever. Do you believe that God ever turned the dimpled cheeks of little children into iron chains to hold a man in slavery? Do you know that a God like that would not make a respectable devil! I want none of his mercy. I want no part and no lot in the heaven of such a god. I will go to perdition, where there is human sympathy. The only voice we have ever had from either of those other worlds came from hell. There was a rich man who prayed his brothers to attend to Lazarus so that they might "not come to this place." That is the only instance, so far as we know, of souls across the river having any sympathy. And I would rather be in hell asking for water than in heaven denying that petition. Well, what is this book inspired about? Where does the inspiration come from? Why was it that so many animals were killed? It was simply to make atonement for man—that is all. They killed something that had not committed a crime, in order that the one who had committed the crime might be acquitted. Based upon that idea is the atonement of the Christian religion. That is the reason I attack this book—because it is the basis of another infamy; viz., that one man can be good for another, or that one man can sin for another. I deny it. You have got to be good for yourself; you have got to sin for yourself. The trouble about the atonement is, that it saves the wrong man. For instance, I kill some one. He is a good man. He loves his wife and children and tries to make them happy; but he is not a Christian, and he goes to hell. Just as soon as I am convicted and cannot get a pardon I get religion, and I go to heaven. The hand of mercy cannot reach down through the shadows of hell to my victim.

There is no atonement for the saint—only for the sinner and the criminal. The atonement saves the wrong man. I have said that I would never make a lecture at all without attacking this doctrine. I did not care what I started out on. I was always going to attack this doctrine. And in my conclusion I want to draw you a few pictures of the Christian heaven. But before I do that I want to say the rest I have to say about Moses. I want you to understand that the Bible was never printed until 1488. I want you to know that up to that time it was in manuscript, in possession of those who could change it if they wished; and they did change it, because no two ever agreed. Much of it was in the waste basket of credulity, in the open mouth of tradition, and in the dull ear of memory. I want you also to know that the Jews themselves never agreed as to what books were inspired, and that there were a lot of books written that were not incorporated in the Old Testament. I want you to know that two or three years before Christ, the Hebrew manuscript was translated into Greek, and that the original from which the translation was made has never been seen since. Some Latin Bibles were found in Africa but no two agreed; and then they translated the Septuagint into the languages of Europe, and no two agreed. Henry VIII. took a little time between murdering his wives to see that the Word of God was translated correctly. You must recollect that we are indebted to murderers for our Bibles and our creeds. Constantine, who helped on the good work in its early stage, murdered his wife and child, mingling their blood with the blood of the Savior.

The Bible that Henry VIII. got up did not suit and then his daughter the murderess of Mary, Queen of Scots, got up another edition, which also did not suit; and, finally, that philosophical idiot, King James, prepared the edition which we now have. There are at least one hundred thousand errors in the Old Testament.

but everybody sees that is not enough to invalidiate its claim to infallibility. But these errors are gradually being fixed, and hereafter the prophet will be fed by Arabs instead of "ravens," and Samson's three hundred foxes will be three hundred "sheaves" already bound, which were fired and thrown into the standing wheat. I want you all to know that there was no contemporaneous literature at the time the Bible was composed, and that the Jews were infinitely ignorant in their day and generation—that they were isolated by bigotry and wickedness from the rest of world. I want you to know that there are fourteen hundred millions of people in the world; and that with all the talk and work of the societies, only one hundred and twenty millions have got Bibles. I want you to understand that not one person in one hundred in this world ever read the Bible, and no two ever understood it alike who did read it, and that no one person probably ever understood it aright. I want you to understand that where this Bible has been, man has hated his brother—there have been dungeons, racks, thumbscrews, and the sword. I want you to know that the cross has been in partnership with the sword, and that the religion of Jesus Christ was established by murderers, tyrants and hypocrites. I want you to know that the church carried the black flag. Then talk about the civilizing influence of this religion

Now, I want to give an idea or two in regard to the Christian's heaven. Of all the selfish things in this world, it is one man wanting to get to heaven, caring nothing what becomes of the rest of mankind. "If I can only get my little soul in!" I have always noticed that the people who have the smallest souls make the most fuss about getting them saved. Here is what we are taught by the church to-day. We are taught by it that fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters can all be happy in heaven, no matter who may be in hell; that the husband can be happy there with the wife that would have died for him at any moment of his life in hell. But they say, "We don't believe in fire. What we believe in now is remorse." What will you have remorse for? For the mean things you have done when you are in hell? Will you have any remorse for the mean things you have done when you are in heaven? Or will you be so good then that you won't care how you used to be? Don't you see what an infinitely mean belief that is. I tell you to-day that, no matter in what heaven you may be, no matter in what star you are spending the summer, if you meet another man whom you have wronged you will drop a little behind in the tune. And, no matter in what part of hell you are, and you meet some one whom you have succored, whose nakedness you have clothed, and whose famine you have fed, the fire will cool up a little. According to this Christian doctrine, when you are in heaven you won't care how mean you were once. What must be the social condition of a gentleman in heaven who will admit that he never would have been there if he had not got scared? What must be the social position of an angel who will always admit that if another had not pitied him he ought to have been damned? Is it a compliment to an infinite God to say that every being He ever made deserved to be damned the minute He got him done, and that He will damn everybody He has not had a chance to make over? Is it possible that somebody else can be good for me, and that this doctrine of the atonement is the only anchor for the human soul?

For instance, here is a man seventy years of age, who has been a splendid fellow and lived according to the laws of nature. He has got about him splendid children, whom he has loved and cared for with all his heart. But he did not happen to believe in this Bible; he did not believe in the Pentateuch. He did not believe that because some children made fun of a gentleman who was short of hair, God sent two bears and tore the little darlings to pieces. He had a tender heart,

and he thought about the mothers who would take the pieces, the bloody fragments of the children, and press them to their bosoms in a frenzy of grief; he thought about their wails and lamentations, and could not believe that God was such an infinite monster. That was all he thought, but he went to hell. Then, there is another man who made a hell on earth for his wife, who had to be taken to the insane asylum, and his children were driven from home and were wanderers and vagrants in the world. But just between the last sin and the last breath, this fellow got religion, and he never did another thing except to take his medicine. He never did a solitary human being a favor, and he died and went to heaven. Don't you think he would be astonished to see that other man in hell, and say to himself, "Is it possible that such a splendid character should bear such fruit, and that all my rascality at last has brought me next to God?"

Or, let us put another case. You were once alone in the desert—no provisions, no water, no hope. Just when your life was at its lowest ebb, a man appeared, gave you water and food and brought you safely out. How you would bless that man. Time rolls on. You die and go to heaven; and one day you see through the black night of hell, the friend who saved your life, begging for a drop of water to cool his parched lips. He cries to you "Remember what I did in the desert—give me to drink." How mean, how contemptible you would feel to see his suffering and be unable to relieve him. But that is the Christian heaven. We sit by the fireside and see the flames and the sparks fly up the chimney—everybody happy, and the cold wind and sleet are beating on the window, and out on the doorstep is a mother with a child on her breast freezing. How happy it makes a fireside, that beautiful contrast. And we say "God is good," and there we sit, and she sits and moans, not one night but forever. Or we are sitting at the table with our wives and children, everybody eating, happy and delighted, and Famine comes and pushes out its shriveled palms, and, with hungry eyes, implores us for a crust; how that would increase the appetite ! And yet that is the Christian heaven. Don't you see that these infamous doctrines petrify the human heart? And I would have every one who hears me, swear that he will never contribute another dollar to build another church, in which is taught such infamous lies. I want everyone of you to say that you never will, directly or indirectly, give a dollar to any man to preach that falsehood. It has done harm enough. It has covered the world with blood. It has filled the asylums for the insane. It has cast a shadow in the heart, in the sunlight of every good and tender man and woman. I say let us rid the heavens of this monster, and write upon the dome "Liberty, love and law."

No matter what may come to me or what may come to you, let us do exactly what we believe to be right, and let us give the exact thought in our brains. Rather than have this Christianity true, I would rather all the gods would destroy themselves this morning. I would rather the whole universe would go to nothing, if such a thing were possible, this instant. Rather than have the glittering dome of pleasure reared on the eternal abyss of pain, I would see the utter and eternal destruction of this universe. I would rather see the shining fabric of our universe crumble to unmeaning chaos and take itself where oblivion broods and memory forgets. I would rather the blind Samson of some imprisoned force, released by thoughtless chance, should so rack and strain this world that man in stress and straint, in astonishment and fear, should suddenly fall back to savagery and barbarity. I would rather that this thrilled and thrilling globe, shorn of all life, should in its cycles rub the wheel, the parent star, on which the light should fall

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as fruitlessly as falls the gaze of love on death, than to have this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment true; rather than have this infamous selfishness of a heaven for a few and a hell for the many established as the word of God !

One world at a time is my doctrine. Let us make some one happy here. Happiness is the interest that a decent action draws, and the more decent actions you do, the larger your income will be. Let every man try to make his wife happy, his children happy. Let every man try to make every day a joy, and God cannot afford to damn such a man. I cannot help God; I cannot injure God. I can help people; I can injure people. Consequently humanity is the only real religion.

I cannot better close this lecture than by quoting four lines from Robert Burns:

"To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."

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